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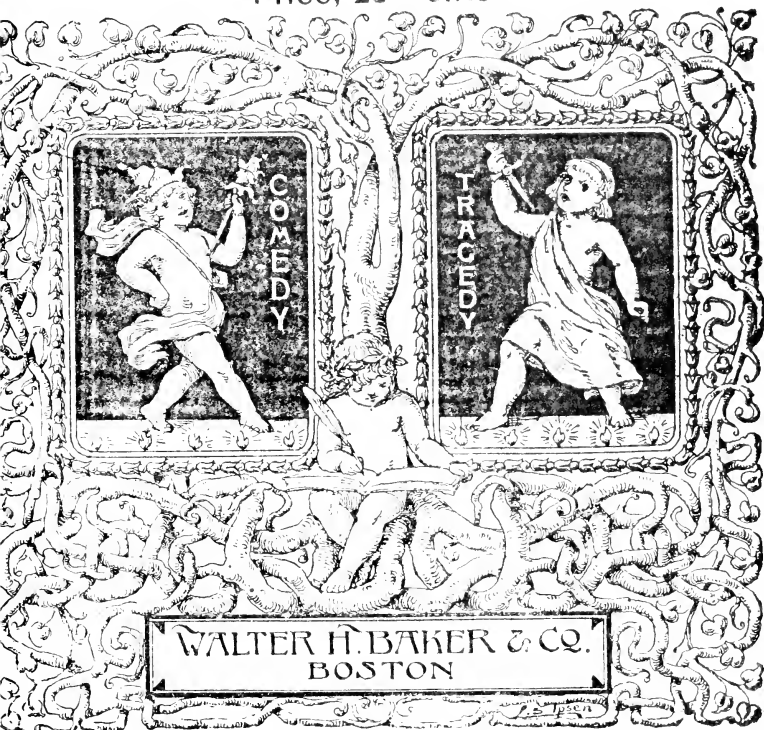
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No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts

The Government Detective

A Play in Four Acts

By

BERNARD FRANCIS MOORE

*Author of "Belle, the Typewriter Girl," "The Irish
Agent," "Brother Against Brother," "Poverty
Flats," "The Moonshiner's Daughter,"
"Judazuma," etc.*

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1910

PS 2429
M35G6

The Government Detective

CHARACTERS

CAPTAIN WILBUR FOSTER, *a government detective; under the assumed name of Paul Gray, a retired banker.*
JOHN ARNOLD, *the captain of a secret band of criminals.*
MARTIN JACKSON, *a wealthy young man.*
ALEXANDER ADAMS, *warden of the Jefferson Prison.*
NICK MORTON, *Foster's assistant.*
JAMES ARMSTRONG, *a retired capitalist.*
EDWIN RAY, *his nephew.*
PETER, *a clerk at the prison.*
MRS. LAURA MARSTON, *a young widow, and John's sister.*
CLARA ARMSTRONG, *James' daughter and heiress.*
EFFIE JACKSON, *Martin's sister.*
MARY, *a servant.*

TIME:—The present.

PLACE:—Denver, Col.

ACT I.—Home of Mrs. Marston. The arrest.

ACT II.—The Jefferson Prison. The escape.

ACT III.—The cabin in the mountains. Foiled.

ACT IV.—The home of Martin Jackson. Pardoned.



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COSTUMES

CAPTAIN WILBUR. Acts I and IV. Dress suit, overcoat, hat and gloves. Acts II and III. Heavy suit, heavy overcoat, cap and gloves, gray wig and short gray beard.

JOHN. Act I. Dress suit. Acts II and III. Heavy suit and overcoat, cap and gloves. Act IV. Gray suit, overcoat, hat and gloves, black moustache.

MARTIN. Acts I and IV. Dress suit, overcoat; hat and gloves, in Act I only. Act II. Convict suit. Act III. Heavy suit, smooth face.

ALEXANDER. Black business suit, black short beard.

NICK. Acts I, II and III. Black suit, overcoat, cap and gloves. Act IV. Dress suit, black moustache.

JAMES. Acts I and IV. Dress suit, hat and overcoat. Act III. Dark suit, heavy overcoat, fur cap and gloves, gray wig and beard.

EDWIN. Acts I and IV. Dress suit; overcoat, hat and gloves. Acts II and III. Heavy suit, heavy overcoat, fur cap and gloves, smooth face.

PETER. Gray suit, smooth face.

LAURA. Act I. Fashionable evening dress. Acts II and III. Dark traveling dress, cloak and furs. Act IV. Gray dress, furs, hat and long cloak.

CLARA. Acts I and IV. Fashionable dress, cloak and hat. Acts II and III. Traveling dress, heavy cloak, furs and hood.

EFFIE. Acts I and IV. Fashionable evening dress, long cloak in Act I only. Act III. Gray dress, cloak and furs.

MARY. Servant's dress.

The Government Detective

ACT I

SCENE.—*A plain room. Doors R., L. and C.; hat-tree in hall, C., in plain sight of audience; fireplace with fire, down L.; table and chairs down R.; down C. a sofa; on each side of door C. a statue on a pedestal; a small writing-desk open up R. C.; on the table is a lighted lamp and shade. Music at rise.*

LAURA (*seated before the fire, L.*). My dear John, do be reasonable! Look at the risk we run.

JOHN (*seated on sofa, C., smoking*). Risk? Where is the risk, I would like to know? It's the easiest thing in the world to slip the bills into Martin's pocket, and then have him searched on suspicion of being a counterfeiter. Once the bills are found, and he will be hurried away to prison, and then my path will be clear to win the peerless Clara Armstrong!

LAURA (*quietly*). That is all very nicely said, my dear brother, but don't forget there is such a body of men as the United States secret service, and its spies are everywhere. Once let us be suspected of this plot, and I think it would be us, and not Martin Jackson, who would be hurried away to prison.

JOHN (*contemptuously*). Don't be such a coward, Laura. There will be no danger to either of us, I assure you.

LAURA. I don't know about that. Still, let me hear how you are going to carry it out, and perhaps I may change my mind.

JOHN. Don't these Armstrongs call on you to-night?

LAURA. They do.

JOHN. Good! Once they are here, I will send a note to Martin, asking him to call here also.

LAURA. There is no need to do that. I have already invited Martin and his sister Effie.

JOHN. So much the better! Did you tell him the Chicago millionaire and his daughter would be here?

LAURA. Certainly.

JOHN. I am glad to hear that. Martin Jackson will come in double quick time when he finds out the Chicago heiress will be here.

LAURA. Still, I don't see what all this has got to do with your scheme.

JOHN. My dear Laura, you are positively growing stupid. Can't you see that once he is under this roof his doom is sealed? (*Places hand on breast pocket of coat.*) I have the package of bills in my pocket which makes out Martin Jackson to be none other than the great counterfeiter chief, Bodkin. When the proper time comes I will quietly drop the bills in his pocket and then notify Nick Morton, the government detective.

LAURA (*smiling*). John, your scheme is a good one, I must say. Still, after all, it might be a failure.

JOHN. Don't be the least bit afraid, Laura. It won't be a failure, but a glorious success!

LAURA. And what am I to get for my share of the work?

JOHN (*laughing*). You always did look out for number one, my most respected sister, Mrs. Laura Marston.

LAURA (*in the same tone*). It is my policy to do so, my most respected brother, John Arnold. (*Quickly.*) Still you haven't answered my question yet. What sum do I get?

JOHN (*slowly*). Well, Laura, if my plan succeeds, and I can win Clara, I will give you a sum of money equal to one hundred thousand dollars. Are you satisfied?

LAURA. I am more than satisfied!

JOHN. Well, Laura, I am glad you will be satisfied. To-night will see the downfall of Martin Jackson.

Enter MARY, C.

MARY. Mr. Paul Gray wishes to see madam.

LAURA (*in surprise*). Mr. Gray? (*Quickly.*) Show him in, Mary.

MARY. Yes, madam.

[*Exit, C.*]

JOHN. Who the deuce is Paul Gray?

LAURA. To me he is a man of mystery. Sometimes I think I understand him, only to find I am as far away from the solution of the mystery as ever.

JOHN. What object has he in coming here?

LAURA. Why, John, the man is madly in love with me. He is an ex-banker and reported to be immensely rich. That, my dear brother, is why I allow him to call here.

JOHN. And are you going to marry him?

LAURA. If he proposes, yes. Not that I am in love with him, but simply because I wish to get hold of his money.

JOHN. God help him and his money if you once get your hands on either of them!

LAURA (*laughing*). Am I such a terrible being then?

JOHN. Oh, no. You are simply a beautiful devil!

LAURA. Say you so, John? Well, I must say I am not pleased at the compliment, coming as it does from my own brother.

JOHN. Your heart is hard enough to bear it, Laura. I think I will leave you for a while with your dear Paul Gray.

(*Rises and exits, L.*)

Enter PAUL GRAY, C., preceded by MARY, who announces him and then exits, C.

LAURA (*rising*). Ah, Mr. Gray! I am delighted to see you. Won't you be seated?

PAUL. You do me proud, Mrs. Marston.

(*Sits on sofa, C.*)

LAURA (*laughing*). Not at all, my dear sir.

PAUL (*aside*). You beautiful devil! (*Aloud.*) Mrs. Marston—Laura, may I call you by that name? (*Rises.*)

LAURA (*laughing*). Why not, pray, seeing it's my own?

PAUL. Well then, Laura, I came here this evening with the fixed determination of asking you to become my wife. (*Crosses to her.*) What answer are you going to give me, Laura?

LAURA. Why, Mr. Gray, I really don't know how to answer you. It is all so sudden, you know.

PAUL (*sadly*). Then you don't love me, after all?

LAURA. I haven't said so, have I? (*Aside.*) I must try and help him now that he has proposed.

PAUL. No, but your words imply as much.

LAURA. My words imply nothing. I do love you, Paul, and I will be your wife on one condition.

PAUL. Name the condition, and I will grant it immediately.

LAURA. Don't make any rash promise.

PAUL. What I say I will do. What is the condition?

LAURA. That there must be no secrets between us.

PAUL. I agree to that. And to show you I am in earnest I will confess myself to you as a counterfeiter, and one who has made a large fortune by the passing of bogus money.

LAURA (*in alarm*). Hush! some one might hear you!

PAUL (*looking around*). No, we are alone. And now, Laura, you hold my liberty in your hands; do with me as you will. I have confessed myself a counterfeiter, and if the secret service men were to hear of it, I would be arrested in a minute.

LAURA. Paul Gray, your secret is safe with me. And as for confessing my faults, I am sorry to say I haven't any to confess.

PAUL (*aside*). Sly as ever! (*Aloud.*) I am delighted to hear that! Of course, as I told you before, my liberty is in your hands after telling you what I am.

LAURA (*aside*). And it will cost you dearly to save it! (*Aloud.*) Paul, your liberty is perfectly safe with me. What you have this day revealed to me shall remain locked within my heart forever.

PAUL. Thank you, my sweet Laura!

LAURA. Come with me, Paul, and I will introduce you to my brother.

PAUL. With all my heart. [*Both exeunt, R.*]

Enter MARY, C., followed by EDWIN RAY.

MARY. You will please remain here, and I will let Mrs. Marston know that you have arrived.

ED. All right, my beauty. Kindly tell her to hurry. You see it's devilish lonesome in a room all by oneself.

MARY. Mrs. Marston will be here directly, sir.

(*Hangs his coat and hat up in the hall on hat-tree, in sight of audience.*)

ED. Tell her to hurry, please.

MARY. Certainly, sir.

[*Exit, C.*]

ED. (*sitting before fire*). It's no use talking, Denver is a great place to live in. Still there is no place like Chicago after all. I left the dear old windy city and came here in search of health and quietness. I am beginning to feel like a top. Only been here a week, and I have already saved the life of a beautiful maiden. I don't know who she was, but her face is

forevermore stamped on my heart. (*Looks around.*) I wonder how long I am to remain here before any one shows up?

Enter JOHN, L.

JOHN (*in surprise*). Oh, I beg pardon. I didn't know the room was occupied. (*Turns.*) I will go.

ED. Stay where you are, old man! The room is large enough for the two of us!

JOHN. The young stranger is good-natured, I see.

(*Sits on sofa, C.*)

ED. Oh, yes, all the people who come from my city are good-natured.

JOHN. Ah, then you do not belong in Denver?

ED. I should hope not.

JOHN. I thought not. From what city do you come?

ED. Allow me to introduce myself to you. I am Edwin Ray, an invalid from the city of Chicago.

JOHN. And I am John Arnold, of Denver, Colorado.

ED. I am glad to know you, old man.

(*Rises, goes to JOHN, who rises, and both shake hands warmly.*)

JOHN. Thank you, sir. (*Both sit as before.*) Are you out here alone, or have you some friends with you?

ED. (*aside*). This fellow is more than seven. (*Aloud.*) My uncle and his daughter, my cousin, are with me.

JOHN. Your uncle and cousin? Then the Chicago millionaire and his beautiful daughter are your relatives?

ED. Do you know them?

JOHN. Oh, yes, I have met them.

ED. I tell you what it is, old man, my cousin is a stunner!

JOHN. A what, sir?

ED. A stunner!

JOHN. I don't understand you.

ED. (*aside*). Holy smoke! I wonder what kind of a dummy this fellow is? (*Aloud.*) I mean is not my cousin a beautiful girl?

JOHN (*clasping his hands*). Divine!

ED. (*aside*). He's gone, poor chap! It's mighty queer how many people fall in love with her. (*Aloud.*) Say, old man, you don't mean to say you are in love with her?

JOHN (*laughing*). Well, hardly! (*Aside.*) I adore her.

Enter LAURA, R.

LAURA (*coming down c.*). Well, Edwin, have you been conversing with my dear brother John?

ED. (*rising, bowing, and then resuming seat*). Oh, yes, we have had a most delightful chat.

JOHN. Yes, Laura, I find the gentleman from Chicago a most charming companion.

ED. (*aside*). He is a regular chump.

LAURA. I am glad to hear you say so, John; I want you and Mr. Ray to be the best of friends.

ED. Oh, we will get along, never fear. (*Aside.*) I wish some one would hit him in the head with a club and wake him up!

LAURA. By the way, Edwin, where are your uncle and cousin? Are they not coming to-night?

ED. Why, I came here to find them. Are they not here yet?

LAURA. Why, no. Where can they be?

ED. Oh, they will turn up after a while. My uncle is too old a boy to get lost in Denver, after passing most of his life among the members of the stock exchange, Chicago.

Enter MARY, C.

MARY. The Chicago gentleman and his daughter have just arrived, madam!

LAURA. Ah! they have come at last! Show them in, Mary.

MARY. Yes, madam.

[*Exit, c.*]

JOHN (*aside to LAURA*). So far all works well.

LAURA (*aside to him*). Yes, but don't fail to keep an eye on the youngster. He is a very sharp young man, and might suspect something was wrong.

JOHN. Trust me for that.

ED. (*aside*). I wonder what that pair of beauties are whispering about? I don't like the looks of things, and I think for the sake of Clara and Chicago, I will keep an eye on them.

Enter MARY, C., followed by JAMES ARMSTRONG and CLARA ARMSTRONG.

MARY (*announcing*). Mr. and Miss Armstrong.

[*Exit, c.*]

JAMES (*removing overcoat and hat*). My dear Mrs. Marston, you must pardon us for being a little tardy. The fact is we met with a slight accident to our automobile.

JOHN. Anything serious, Mr. Armstrong?

JAMES. No. We merely ran into another car, that was all.

LAURA. And was your daughter hurt, sir?

CLARA (*has in the meantime removed her wraps and now comes down*). Oh, no, Mrs. Marston, it takes more than a mere shaking up to hurt a Chicago girl!

(*She crosses to LAURA, and both converse.*)

JAMES (*to ED.*). Well, Eddie, have you been here long?

ED. Not so very long, uncle.

JAMES. Have you been lonesome waiting for me?

ED. How could one be lonesome, uncle, with Mr. Arnold in the house?

JAMES (*aside*). Heaven help Arnold, if he has been talking to Edwin. The poor devil must be insane by this time.

(*He crosses to JOHN, and both converse.*)

CLARA (*leaving LAURA and crossing to ED. ; LAURA going to desk and looking over some papers*). Well, Eddie, you managed to come after all, it seems?

ED. Certainly I did. But say, let up on this Eddie business, will you? I am no child now.

CLARA. Edwin, do try and speak in a civilized manner once in a while.

ED. I will, if you stop calling me Eddie!

CLARA (*laughing*). I will, if you wish it.

ED. I do wish it. What if I was to fall in love with some beautiful girl, and to have her hear you calling me Eddie—oh, Lord!

CLARA. That would be dreadful, wouldn't it?

ED. Well, I should smile.

CLARA. There you go again.

ED. All right, sis, I will try and talk according to the rules laid down by Murray.

CLARA. See that you do now.

Enter MARY, C.

MARY. Mr. Jackson and his sister have just arrived, madam.

LAURA. Show them in, Mary.

MARY. Yes, madam.

[*Exit, c.*

ED. I was not aware that Martin Jackson had a sister.

CLARA. My dear Edwin, you are not supposed to know everything.

ED. So it seems.

LAURA (*coming down*). Oh, yes, Edwin, Martin has a sister, and a very beautiful one at that. So be warned in time and look out for your heart, or it will be in the keeping of Effie Jackson, before you know it.

ED. Nonsense!

LAURA. Very well, Edwin. Time will tell whether I was wrong or right.

CLARA (*laughing*). You hear your fate, sir?

ED. We shall see.

Enter MARY, c., followed by MARTIN JACKSON and EFFIE JACKSON.

MARY. Mr. and Miss Jackson.

MARTIN (*removing hat and coat and hanging them on hat-tree*). I hope I am not late?

LAURA. Better late than never.

MARTIN (*crossing to JOHN and JAMES*). Good-evening, Mr. Armstrong, and you, John.

(JOHN *merely nods his head.*)

JAMES. Why, Martin, I am really delighted to see you.

(*They converse in low tones.*)

CLARA (*helping EFFIE off with wraps and then leading her down c.*). Come along, Effie, and I will introduce you to my cousin.

EFFIE (*in surprise*). Your cousin?

(LAURA *has in the meantime returned to the desk.*)

CLARA. Oh, yes. Come, Edwin, let me introduce you to my friend, Effie Jackson.

ED. (*rising and looking around*). Why, certainly. Holy smoke!

EFFIE (*in surprise*). My saviour!

LAURA (*coming down to them*). What is the matter?

(*All gather around.*)

CLARA (*in surprise*). You have met before?

EFFIE. The gentleman saved my life this afternoon.

JAMES. Lucky dog, old fellow!

Enter MARY, C.

MARY. Lunch is served, madam. [*Exit, C.*]

LAURA (*to MARY*). Very well, Mary. (*Then to the others.*) Come, friends, and partake of a slight repast which awaits us. Come with me.

MARTIN. Mrs. Marston, you will kindly excuse me for a moment. I have a few words to say to Miss Armstrong in private.

LAURA. Oh, very well. Come when you are ready.

(*All exeunt, C., arm in arm.*)

CLARA. Well, Mr. Jackson?

MARTIN. Miss Armstrong, I wish to speak what is on my mind. I am no fortune hunter. I have valuable estates which make me a rich man. If I was a poor, penniless youth, what I am going to say would remain unspoken. Miss Clara, I have loved you from the moment I first set eyes on you. I loved you then as I do now. I love you truly and honestly, and want you to become my wife.

CLARA. I will be frank with you, as you have been with me. I do love you, Martin, and will be your wife!

MARTIN. My angel! (*He embraces her.*)

CLARA. But remember, Martin, I will never live in Denver. Chicago is good enough for me.

MARTIN. No matter, Clara. I can easily rent my property and live with you there.

CLARA. I am glad to hear you say that, Martin. Come along to supper now. [*Both exeunt, C.*]

Enter JOHN, R.

JOHN (*looking around*). Now is my time to place the bills in Martin's pocket. I excused myself from the rest of

them, and none of them will suspect me. Once the bills are in his pocket and I will send a note to Nick Morton, the detective. Once Martin is out of my way my path will be clear to win the hand of Clara. (*He looks around cautiously, and then drops the package of bills in the breast pocket of MARTIN'S overcoat.*) It is done! So far all works well. Now to notify the officers of the law, and then join the rest of them at supper. [*Exit, c.*]

Enter PAUL, R.

PAUL. I do not understand what object John Arnold had in leaving the table. There is some deep scheme going on, and I must keep my eyes open. (*Looks around.*) I would like to know what he was doing in this room just now. I think I will follow him and see where he goes. As an officer of the government, I must be on my guard. If my identity was known in this house, I am sure some of the inmates would not care to have me around. [*Exit, c.*]

Enter ED. and EFFIE, R.

ED. I am more than pleased; in fact, I am delighted to find you here to-night.

EFFIE. And I am more than glad I am here to return thanks to the young man who so gallantly saved my life at the risk of his own.

ED. It was purely accidental, I assure you. All I had to do was to grasp the horse by the bridle, and it was all over!

EFFIE. Are all the men from Chicago as modest as you are?

ED. (*aside*). I wish she would change the subject. (*Aloud.*) Most men would risk their lives to save any one in distress, not alone in Chicago, but in any other state or country.

EFFIE. Ah, I fear you are too modest!

ED. Modest? Well, that is the first I ever heard of it. If you were to tell that to my cousin Clara, I don't think she would quite agree with you. Of course, if you say so, it must be true.

EFFIE (*warmly*). I do say so. Why, I was so thankful for what you had done, that if you had remained I would have thrown my arms around your neck and kissed you, as a sign of gratitude for saving my life!

ED. (*aside*). Oh, Lord! (*Aloud.*) Is that so?

EFFIE. Yes, indeed, I would!

ED. (*aside*). I wish I had remained. (*Aloud.*) My dear young lady, if I had only known that in time, I would not have disappeared in such a hurry. Of course it's too late now?

EFFIE (*laughing*). Most decidedly it is!

ED. Just my luck! I always manage to escape what is good. (*Aside.*) I will have to change my opinion of the Denver girls after this.

Enter NICK MORTON, c.

NICK. I beg your pardon. (*Looks around.*) Where is Mrs. Laura Marston?

ED. (*to EFFIE*). You had better answer that question.

EFFIE. Mrs. Marston is entertaining some guests in the next room.

NICK. Tell her and her friends to come here at once.

EFFIE. Yes, sir. [*Exit, c.*]

ED. To what is Mrs. Marston and her friends indebted for this visit?

NICK. You will see presently.

Enter all, c.

LAURA (*to NICK*). Well, sir, what is your pleasure with me?

NICK. You will pardon me for disturbing yourself and friends, but I am here to arrest one Martin Jackson!

MARTIN. I am the gentleman you name. Of what crime am I accused?

NICK. You are accused of being a counterfeiter!

ALL (*in surprise*). A counterfeiter?

NICK. Yes, and the proof is here.

(*He takes bills from MARTIN'S coat.*)

PAUL (*aside*). That was what John was doing in the room alone.

MARTIN. There is some terrible mistake somewhere!

EFFIE. Oh, Martin, am I to be left alone?

(*Sinks in a chair, r.*)

MARTIN. Don't give up, Effie. All will yet be well.

CLARA (*throwing her arms around MARTIN'S neck*). Oh, Martin, will they tear us apart?

MARTIN (*kissing her*). For the present, yes. (*Hands her*

to ED.) Here, Edwin, I give you charge of my future wife. Some one has accused me of being a counterfeiter, though heaven knows I am innocent !

ED. (*taking CLARA from him*). I believe you !

NICK. Come, sir !

(*Places hand on MARTIN'S shoulder.*)

MARTIN *and* NICK.

JAMES, PAUL *and* LAURA
and JOHN, *down R.*

ED., CLARA
and EFFIE.

SLOW CURTAIN

(Between Acts I and II a month is supposed to elapse.)

ACT II

SCENE.—*A plain room. Desk R., and another, R. C. ; large double door, C. ; a row of chairs, L. ; two more, L. C. ; maps on the wall. PETER is seated at desk, R. C., as the curtain rises.*

PETER (*looking at watch*). It's time Mr. Adams was here.

Enter ALEXANDER ADAMS, C.

ALEX. Well, Peter, has the mail arrived yet?

PETER. The mail is on your desk, sir.

ALEX. Very well. (*Sits at desk, L. C., and begins to open letters.*) From Denver! (*Looks at envelope.*) I wonder what is it about? (*Opens it.*) I suppose the only way to find out is to read it. (*Reads aloud.*) "Do not allow party from Chicago to see the young prisoner, Martin Jackson, under no consideration. Signed, John Arnold." So, John, you are up to your old tricks again, are you? Well, keep on, my dear fellow, and some day you will be an inmate of the Jefferson prison! Of course I must do as he wishes me, law or no law, as my oath to the brotherhood of counterfeiters compels me, unless a message direct from the governor is sent here.

Enter PAUL, C.

PAUL (*looking around*). Well, Mr. Adams, how are all the prisoners getting along?

ALEX. (*aside ; rising*). The chairman of the board of commissioners. (*Aloud.*) All well, Mr. Gray.

PAUL. I am glad to know that; and when I make my report to the governor, I shall mention your name to him, Mr. Adams! (*Aside.*) But in a different manner from what you suppose, you scoundrel!

ALEX. Thank you, Mr. Gray.

PAUL. By the way, has any one been here to see the young counterfeiter, Martin Jackson?

ALEX. Up to the present time, no one.

PAUL. Should any one bearing a pass signed by the at-

torney-general of the state wish to see him, you will know what to do.

ALEX. Yes, sir. (*Aside.*) Here is a nice state of affairs, I must say. (*Aloud.*) Won't you be seated, Mr. Gray? (*Brings chair down C. from L. C.*) I have some business to attend to.

PAUL (*sitting down*). I will wait here for you.

ALEX. Very well, sir. I will be back here in a short time. [*Exit, C.*]

PAUL (*looking around*). I wonder how long will I have to remain here before Nick Morton turns up?

Enter NICK, C.

NICK (*in a whisper*). I am here at last, captain.

PAUL. And what have you learned?

NICK. The Chicago millionaire and his family will be here in a short time. Mrs. Marston and her brother, John Arnold, will also be here to see the prisoner.

PAUL. You must keep your eyes open, Nick, and learn all you can. At last I think we are on the right track of discovering who the members of this band of counterfeiters really are.

NICK. I hope so, captain. But I fear we have a shrewd crowd to deal with.

PAUL. I know that, Nick, but we will down them yet. (*Rises.*) Come, let us take a look around.

NICK. Very well, captain. [*Both exeunt, C.*]

PETER. I wonder what is bringing all the visitors to the prison to-day, and in such a frightful snow-storm? Something of importance must be going on.

Enter JOHN, C.

JOHN (*to* PETER). Where is Mr. Adams, the warden?

PETER. He just went out, sir. He will be back in a moment.

JOHN. What was Mr. Gray, the banker, doing in here just now with the government detective, Nick Morton?

PETER. Mr. Gray was in here to see the warden.

JOHN. And what of the detective?

PETER. He came in afterward and held a whispered conversation with the banker.

JOHN. Indeed! (*Aside.*) Can any one suspect me? I don't much like this banker, Paul Gray, although he is soon to be my brother-in-law.

Enter ALEX., C.

ALEX. Ah, John, you here? (*Both shake hands.*)

JOHN. Oh, yes, I came to inquire about the young prisoner, Martin Jackson.

ALEX. Indeed!

JOHN. Has any one been here to see him yet?

ALEX. So far no one.

JOHN. Good! Should the Chicago millionaire and his daughter come here to-day to see him, you must try and prevent them from meeting the prisoner at all hazards.

ALEX. (*shaking his head*). Your wish is impossible! I have just received orders from the attorney-general of the state concerning the prisoner, and I must obey them. (*Quickly.*) Besides, Mr. Paul Gray, the banker, is chairman of the prison board.

JOHN (*in surprise*). Is that so?

ALEX. You understand the position I am in, when I tell you the gentleman is visiting the prison at the present time. But why don't you wish the prisoner to meet your sister?

JOHN. Because, woman like, she is madly in love with him, and would assist him to escape from this place. To have him leave at the present time would spoil all my plans. (*Looks around cautiously.*) Where is the prisoner now?

ALEX. At work in one of the shops.

JOHN. How does he take the loss of his liberty?

ALEX. He shows no outward sign of emotion. Yet I fear there is a devil slumbering in his breast which the slightest thing will disturb.

JOHN. Let us go and see him. I want to see how life in prison agrees with him. Up to the present, Martin Jackson believes me to be one of his best friends.

ALEX. What if he was to learn the truth? That instead of being his friend, you are, on the contrary, his most bitter enemy?

JOHN. What good will that do him? Here he is, and here he is going to remain.

ALEX. It would be far better if some of the prisoners were actually dead and in their graves. The torments of the other world cannot be much worse than the suffering endured by some of the convicts here! Poor devils! Sometimes I pity them!

JOHN. Nonsense! You are growing too tender hearted by

far, Alexander. What do you think our comrades would say if they could hear you speak as you do?

ALEX. I suppose they would consider them treasonable to the good of the society.

JOHN. I fear you are right. So quit your moralizing and come and show me where Martin Jackson is at work.

ALEX. (*walking toward C.*). Come along, then.

[*Both exeunt, C.*]

PETER. I wonder what the devil was all that whispering about? I hope there is not going to be a general overhauling of the prison officials.

Enter ED., C.

ED. (*looking around and then to PETER*). I beg your pardon, but can you tell me where I can find the man who runs this place?

PETER. If you mean Mr. Adams, the warden, why he just went out in company with a visitor as you came in.

ED. Just went out, did he? When do you expect him back?

PETER. In a short time.

ED. I believe I will wait for him. (*Sits L.*)

PETER. Very well, sir. (*Continues writing.*)

ED. Now what the deuce does all this mystery mean? What could bring John Arnold and his sister to the prison? And what is still stranger, neither one seems to know that the other is here. And then there is that remarkable man calling himself Paul Gray, the ex-banker. What the devil is he doing here in the prison?

Enter PAUL, C.

PAUL (*coming down to ED.*). So you are here at last, are you?

ED. Yes, what is left of me. (*Quickly.*) By the way, Mr. Gray, what are you doing out here? I thought you were in Denver, making preparations for your coming marriage with Mrs. Marston.

PAUL (*looking around and then in a whisper*). My boy, I think I can trust you.

ED. Why, of course you can.

PAUL. I am working in the same cause you are.

ED. And that is ——?

PAUL. The rescue of Martin Jackson, and the bringing to justice of his enemies!

ED. Indeed! (*Quickly.*) How do you know I am trying to rescue the prisoner?

PAUL. My boy, I know more than you think I do. So trust in me and all will be well. Do you believe me?

ED. I suppose I will have to.

PAUL. You speak as if you still doubted me. Don't be afraid to trust me. I know Martin Jackson is accused of a crime he never committed. So far I have not sufficient evidence to set him at liberty.

ED. Well, Mr. Gray, I will trust you. And if it's anything to hunt down the enemies of Martin Jackson, I am with you heart and soul. And there is my hand on it!

(*Both shake hands.*)

PAUL. It is now to work for the release of our friend, Martin Jackson.

ED. Hush! (*Looks around.*) Some one is coming.

Enter ALEX., C.

ALEX. (*coming down c.*). Sorry to have kept you waiting, gentlemen. (*To ED.*) Well, sir, what can I do for you?

ED. I wish to see the prisoner known as Martin Jackson.

ALEX. (*aside*). I am in for it now. It will never do for me to refuse him while Mr. Gray is present. (*Aloud.*) The prisoner you mention is now at work in one of the shops.

PAUL (*sternly*). You will oblige me very much, Mr. Adams, by having the prisoner brought here!

ALEX. (*aside*). I dare not refuse that order. (*Aloud.*) Certainly, sir. (*To PETER.*) Peter, tell the guard to bring in the prisoner known as Martin Jackson.

PETER (*rising*). Yes, sir. [*Exit, c.*]

PAUL. While the prisoner is here, Mr. Adams, you will kindly leave us alone with him.

ALEX. But the law?

PAUL (*sternly*). Mr. Adams, you are aware of my authority, I presume!

Enter MARTIN, C., slowly.

ALEX. (*humbly*). It shall be as you wish, sir. [*Exit, c.*]
MARTIN (*rushing forward and shaking hands with ED. and*

PAUL). Edwin, my friend, and you too, sir. I did not know I had such good friends in all the world.

PAUL. Cheer up, my boy! All will yet be well. There is some scheme on foot to keep you a prisoner here, but we will soon be at the bottom of it. Hey, Edwin?

ED. Right you are, sir!

MARTIN. Thank you, dear friends. It is worth while being held a prisoner to discover I had two such devoted friends.

ED. And my cousin Clara loves you just the same as ever. It will take more than this to shake her faith in you.

MARTIN (*sadly*). And yet it is hard to be accused of a crime I never committed. The bills found in my pocket were placed there by some enemy who desired to bring about my ruin. I did not think I had an enemy in the world.

PAUL. Come, come, youngster, don't give up all hope. Would you refuse to escape if the chance was given you?

MARTIN. Escape? And in so doing leave myself open to the suspicion that I was really a counterfeiter, as they accused me of being? When I leave this place it will be as a free man, and without a stain on my good name.

PAUL. Nonsense! We are here to help you to escape from this place.

MARTIN (*sternly*). Escape? Never until I am proven innocent of the crime I am accused of.

PAUL (*to ED.*). My boy, what are we to do with this headstrong youth? He absolutely refuses to leave this place with us.

ED. Leave him to me, Mr. Gray, and you will see the impression I will make on his hard heart.

PAUL. Very well. Go ahead and see if you can convince him it's to his own interest to escape.

ED. Have no fear, sir. When I get through arguing the question with him in my own peculiar way, he will be only too willing to make his escape.

PAUL (*fervently*). I sincerely hope so. But go ahead and be quick about it, as we haven't much time to lose.

ED. All right.

PAUL. Once the night is on us we might lose our way and perish in the snow. (*Walks up R.*)

ED. Martin, listen to me for a moment.

MARTIN. Well?

ED. It is not well, Martin. As Mr. Gray has told you, we are here to help you to escape.

MARTIN. And as I told him so now I tell you, I have no desire to escape.

ED. My dear sir, you speak foolishly when you say so. You have nothing to gain and everything to lose by remaining here. By remaining you simply acknowledge yourself guilty of the crime of which you are accused. By escaping you will have a chance of finding the guilty ones and making your innocence known to all the world. Then there is your beautiful sister left alone and friendless.

MARTIN (*sadly*). Poor Effie!

ED. And then there is my cousin Clara.

MARTIN (*passionately*). Clara, dream of my life. (*Quickly*.) And does she believe me guilty of being a counterfeiter?

ED. Believe nothing!

MARTIN (*fervently*). Thank God!

ED. (*aside*). I have struck the right track at last. (*Aloud*.) My dear Martin, she would marry you to-morrow if you were only free!

MARTIN (*slowly*). Free! freedom! How sweet that word sounds to me.

ED. Take your chance and escape while there is yet time. This is your only show, so make the most of it.

MARTIN. Escape?

ED. Yes, you must answer at once. Remember, it's liberty and Clara Armstrong, the girl of your heart!

MARTIN. Liberty and Clara?

ED. Yes; your answer? What is it going to be? Yes or no?

MARTIN. My answer is yes! I will escape!

ED. Good! Now you are speaking like a sensible being.

PAUL (*coming down*). Well, Edwin, have you won him over yet?

ED. (*laughing*). Well, I should say so.

PAUL. Indeed! How was it accomplished?

ED. By the name of my cousin Clara.

PAUL. Ah, so we have a woman in the case, have we?

MARTIN. Yes, and a very beautiful one at that. But come to the point at once. What is the plan of escape you have laid out for my benefit?

ED. Listen then. You and I will exchange clothes. We are of the same size, and the difference will never be noticed. By keeping your face covered you can easily pass the guard, and all will then be well. Mr. Gray has a sleigh and a fast

team of horses at hand. Once you are on the outside, escape will be easy. Mr. Gray will take you to a cabin in the mountains where all the police of Denver will never find you. When you reach the cabin you will remain there in all security until I come.

MARTIN. But when they find out I have escaped will they not seek to avenge themselves on you?

ED. I'll take my chances.

MARTIN. Very well, then. When do you propose to make the change?

ED. In a short time.

MARTIN. When you are ready to make the change, you will find me ready also.

ED. (*looking around*). Hush! Some one is coming!

PAUL. Come, Edwin, let us go and see that the sleigh and horses are in readiness for the flight of the prisoner to the cabin in the mountains.

ED. Wait until we see who is coming.

Enter ALEX., C.

ALEX. Gentlemen, time is up. Sorry to disturb, but such are the rules of the prison.

ED. We have no desire to break the rules of the prison. Come, Mr. Gray. [*Both exeunt, C.*]

ALEX. Well, prisoner, have your friends any confidence in being able to procure a pardon for you from the governor?

MARTIN (*sadly*). In such a case as mine, I fear my friends can do but little.

ALEX. Sorry to hear you say that. Still who knows what might turn up when least expected? This is the last place in the world I would like to see a young man sent for any number of years.

MARTIN. You may well say so.

Enter PETER, C.

PETER. A lady wishes to see the prisoner, Martin Jackson.

MARTIN. A lady? (*Aside.*) Perhaps Clara!

ALEX. Who is she?

PETER. She gave the name of Mrs. Laura Marston!

ALEX. Mrs. Marston? (*Aside.*) John's sister! (*Aloud.*) Show her in.

PETER. Yes, sir.

[*Exit, C.*]

ALEX. I don't know what her business may be with you, but I suppose it will be private. I will leave you alone with her. *[Exit, c.]*

MARTIN (*bowing*). Thank you, sir. Now what the deuce can bring the widow to see me? I suppose I will soon know all, for she must be close at hand, as I hear the rustle of her skirts outside the door.

Enter LAURA, c.

LAURA. You seem surprised to see me, Martin?

MARTIN. I am more than surprised to see Mrs. Marston inside the walls of the Jefferson state prison.

LAURA. I had a motive in coming here to see you, Martin.

MARTIN. Indeed!

LAURA. I came to offer you the means of escaping from this terrible place of imprisonment!

MARTIN. You speak strangely, Mrs. Marston.

LAURA. Do I? Then I will make my meaning clear to you. I love you, Martin Jackson, from the bottom of my heart, and would aid you in making your escape from this dreadful place. However unwomanly it may seem in declaring my love, I mean it in all sincerity.

MARTIN. Love?

LAURA. Yes, Martin Jackson, love. I have never felt this affection for any living being before. Married when but sixteen years old to a man old enough to be my grandfather, you may well say my lot was not a happy one. Three months after the wedding my husband died, leaving me a widow when little more than a child. I never loved until the night I met you at my home, when you were arrested. From that moment I loved you madly, passionately. True, I have promised to become the wife of Paul Gray, but that was before I really knew you. The engagement can be easily broken. But the love I have for you, Martin, would lead me to brave all. I would give up wealth, friends and everything. I would be willing to live in the greatest of poverty to be by your side. Now, Martin, you have heard my confession, what do you say?

MARTIN. Nothing, Mrs. Marston, nothing.

LAURA. Then you will take advantage of the means of escape I have prepared?

MARTIN. It is impossible.

LAURA. Impossible, you say? What do you mean by impossible? Nothing is impossible in this life.

MARTIN. I mean it is impossible for me to return your affection.

LAURA. Then you love another? Ah, yes, I see it all now. You are in love with the daughter of this Chicago millionaire. Ah, yes, I should have known better. You love her, then?

MARTIN. I do, indeed.

LAURA. And do you think for a moment that a girl like her could return the affections of a convict?

MARTIN. Mrs. Marston, you forget what you say!

LAURA. Pardon me, Martin, but my love for you makes me unreasonable.

MARTIN. Besides, you must remember Clara Armstrong is a girl who loves but once in her life, and once the idol of her dreams is shattered she never loves again!

LAURA. Very true, indeed, Martin. But still the world looks on you now as a convict.

MARTIN. A convict, Mrs. Marston?

LAURA. Yes, a convict. Are you not a counterfeiter, found with the bills in your possession?

MARTIN. You know I am no counterfeiter, Mrs. Marston. The bills were placed there by an enemy!

LAURA. An enemy?

MARTIN. Yes, by an enemy. What the object was I have been unable to learn.

LAURA. You forget, Martin Jackson, you were a guest in my house when the bills were found and you were arrested. Surely you don't suspect me of having any hand in the plot, if plot there were, as you say?

MARTIN. I suspect no one. Some day the truth will be found out and the guilty will be punished.

LAURA. I must be going now, Martin. Remember my offer to assist you to escape still holds good. When you wish to communicate with me, write. All letters written by you to me will be delivered. For the present, bye, bye. [*Exit, c.*]

MARTIN (*looking after her, and then to audience*). Well, of all the surprises I ever received in all my life, that one was the greatest. Women are queer creatures when you come to consider them in a careful manner.

Enter PAUL, c.

PAUL. So your beautiful visitor has left you, has she?

MARTIN. Yes, she just left me.

Enter ED., c.

ED. Now is your time, Martin. The night is coming on and it will soon be dark. Change clothes with me quickly and when Mr. Gray leaves you will go with him.

(Both quickly change upper garments.)

MARTIN. But our features are not the same!

ED. That don't matter. If you can escape from this room without being discovered, all is well. This you can do by keeping your face concealed as much as possible. Once you reach the gate you will find the team and sleigh. Mr. Gray will show you the cabin in the mountains of which I spoke.

MARTIN. But look at the risk you run.

ED. Never mind the risk. Do as I tell you. Remember, it is for Clara and freedom you are doing it.

MARTIN. Ah, yes, for her sake I will brave all.

ED. Now you are beginning to talk sense. Are you ready?

MARTIN. All is ready.

ED. *(shaking hands with MARTIN)*. Then good-bye until we meet again.

MARTIN *(fervently)*. Good-bye, and may you escape from all harm. You are doing the act of a hero. Good-bye.

[Exit, c., with PAUL.]

ED. And now to prepare for that devil, John Arnold, and his confederates. Won't they be surprised when they discover that the prisoner has escaped? Well, I guess, yes.

(Sits L., and bows his head.)

Enter JOHN and ALEX., c.

JOHN. And now we are alone with the prisoner at last. Paul Gray and his young Chicago friend have left the prison for the city in a blinding snow-storm. Good thing if they both perished. And now to hear the news. But first we must have Martin Jackson sent back to his prison cell.

ALEX. Very well. *(Touches ED. on the shoulder.)* Come, young man, you must return to your cell.

ED. *(rising)*. I am ready.

JOHN. That is certainly not the voice of the prisoner, Martin Jackson.

ALEX. What do you mean?

JOHN. I mean we have allowed the prisoner to slip through our fingers by our cursed stupidity!

ED. (*facing them*). Gentlemen, I am sorry to say you are right. The prisoner has changed his boarding-house!

ED., C.

JOHN, R.

ALEX., L.

QUICK CURTAIN

(One night is supposed to elapse between Act II and Act III.)

ACT III

SCENE.—*A plain room. Doors R. and L. C. ; a window covered with frost, R. C. ; fireplace with fire, L. ; bench before fireplace ; table and chairs down R. Music at rise.*

Enter JAMES, R. C.

JAMES (*looking around*). No one here but myself. (*Looks at watch.*) 'Ten o'clock and Edwin not here-yet. (*Crosses to fireplace, lights cigar, and then sits down before the fire.*) It is not possible the officials of the prison would hold him as a hostage for the return of Martin Jackson. Still Edwin is cool-headed and has got out of tighter scrapes than this before.

Enter CLARA, R. C.

CLARA (*crossing to L.*). Any news of Edwin yet, father?

JAMES (*shaking his head*). So far, none.

CLARA. I am so afraid something has happened to him. He is so impatient, and might do or say something for which he might be arrested.

JAMES. Have no fear about him, Clara. He is one of those young men who are able to take care of themselves.

* CLARA (*sitting at table L.*). That is true enough, father. Yet some word from Edwin, at the present time, would do much to set my mind at rest. Perhaps Mr. Adams, the warden of the prison, has made a prisoner of him.

JAMES (*laughing*). Nonsense, child! Has not Mr. Gray promised to see that Edwin is saved if the worst comes to the worst?

CLARA. And who is this Mr. Gray, that he can make such a promise as that?

JAMES. Now you are asking me a question I cannot answer. All I know is that he claims to be the chairman of the prison board of commissioners.

CLARA (*fervently*). Whoever or whatever he is, I sincerely hope he will protect Edwin from the fury of his enemies.

JAMES. Enemies, Clara? Why, Edwin has no enemies in the world.

CLARA. Well, not exactly his enemies, father. But then I so look upon the prison officials from where Martin made his escape. Remember, they will have no love for the one who has cheated them out of their prey.

JAMES. That is very true, Clara. Still I think in a short time Edwin will be here.

CLARA. I hope so, father.

JAMES. Where is Mr. Gray now? (*Rises.*)

CLARA. Talking with Martin and his sister.

JAMES (*crossing to R.*). I think I will go and speak to him about the non-appearance of your cousin.

CLARA. Do, father, by all means. And when you return bring me a message of good cheer.

JAMES. Don't give up, Clara. I haven't the slightest doubt but that Mr. Gray will keep his word and take care of Edwin.

[*Exit, R.*]

CLARA. Oh, if anything should happen to my dear cousin, Edwin, I would never forgive myself for allowing him to run the risk he did. And yet the promise given to me by that mysterious man, Mr. Gray, that nothing would happen to Edwin, seems to set my mind at rest.

Enter PAUL, R.

PAUL. Well, well, my little girl, why are you so downcast this morning? Are you not delighted to have your future husband safe and sound again by your side, after being rescued from a living grave?

CLARA. Oh, yes, Mr. Gray, and thank you from the bottom of my heart for the great assistance you have rendered in the hour of need!

PAUL. Then why this silence?

CLARA. I am greatly worried over the non-arrival of my cousin, Edwin. According to your own statement, if all went well, he should have been here last night. Yet now it is morning and we have not seen sight of him so far. Oh, if anything should have befallen him, I would never forgive myself.

PAUL (*patting her on the head*). There, there, little woman, don't give up yet. I promise that your cousin shall return to us all safe and sound.

CLARA. What do you mean, Mr. Gray?

PAUL. I mean just what I say, and nothing more. However, there is yet time for his arrival. Last night's terrible storm may have delayed him the same as it did us.

CLARA. Oh, Mr. Gray, you don't know what a load you have taken from my heart by your kind and hopeful words.

PAUL. There, there, little lady, run along now and join your future husband. I know that he is dying to have a chat with you.

CLARA (*rising*). Mr. Gray, will you answer me one question without hesitation?

PAUL. Perhaps. That all depends on what the question is going to be.

CLARA. It is one that is easily answered.

PAUL. Indeed!

CLARA. Yes.

PAUL. Then what is this all important question going to be?

CLARA. Who are you?

PAUL. Who am I?

CLARA. Yes.

PAUL. I am simply Paul Gray, ex-banker of Denver, Col. Run along now and join Martin. I am sure he is anxious to have you by his side.

CLARA. Oh, very well, I will go. But just the same I intend to find out who you really are before I return to Chicago.

PAUL. All right, little woman. (*Listens.*) I think I hear Martin calling you now.

CLARA. I am going to him; but won't you join us?

PAUL. Not just at present. I am hourly expecting the arrival of Nick Morton, the secret service officer. Once he is here and I will know if it is necessary for me to return to the prison.

CLARA. In that case, sir, I will not delay you any longer.

[*Exit, R.*

PAUL. By jingo, she is a charming girl and no mistake. If the government only had a dozen men like her and her cousin, there would not be a single counterfeiter in America that the government wouldn't know something about. (*Crosses to fireplace.*) Time Nick should be here. (*Looks at his watch.*) I wonder what detains him? (*Door L. C. opens as he looks around.*) Ah, he is here at last!

Enter NICK, L. C.

NICK. Good-morning, captain.

PAUL. Well, Nick, what detained you? You are a long

way behind time this morning. I never knew you to fail me before. (*Both sit L. and R. of table.*)

NICK. The road was so full of snow that it was impossible for me to make greater headway than I did.

PAUL. What of the Chicago youth we left in the prison?

NICK. Is he not here with you all?

PAUL. Here? (*Jumps up.*) Why, you don't mean to say he left last night in the storm?

NICK. Certainly I do!

PAUL (*walking up and down the room*). My God! then he has perished in the storm!

NICK (*watching him*). Perhaps he might have sought shelter in the home of some mountaineer along the road.

PAUL (*sitting down again*). That would have been his only chance to save his life. How can I tell the sad news to that dear girl and her father, if anything has happened to him? I should have told them all at the prison.

NICK. And by so doing spoil all our plans and at the same time put the members of Captain Bodkin's band of counterfeiters on their guard.

PAUL. That is true enough, Nick. Still I hate to think that the young man should have perished through my trying to find out the members of a secret band of criminals.

NICK. I don't altogether think the young fellow has been lost. A boy with such energy and pluck would make a desperate fight for his life. A calm head will do much in time of danger. Who knows but in not coming here last night he might have discovered who the head of the counterfeiters really is?

PAUL. If I could only believe so. For more than three years this band of counterfeiters have baffled every effort of the secret service to discover who this Captain Bodkin is. Once his identity is known to me the rest will be easy.

NICK. Still you must admit, whoever he is, he is a clever man, by the way he covers up his tracks.

PAUL. Oh, I give him credit for all that, Nick. But remember the smartest men fail in the end. All the same I would very much like to find out who the man is. Just think, Nick, what a power he would be in the diplomatic service if he was only an honest man.

NICK. You may well say so. A man like him would be a credit to any nation. Only to think he is on the downward path, and will come to an end when he least expects it.

PAUL. I tell you what it is, Nick, I hate to see such a man on the road to destruction through his own blind foolishness.

NICK. Have you never had any suspicions who he is?

PAUL. Sometimes I think he must be the relative of some great man, who is thus able to warn him of danger.

NICK. Perhaps you may be right. (*Rises.*) No doubt the storm has cleared away by this time. Had we not better go out and search for the missing youngster?

PAUL (*rising*). That is a good idea, Nick, and we will start out at once. I sincerely hope we will be able to find him.

NICK. Let us go then. [*Both exeunt, L. C.*]

Enter MARTIN and CLARA, R.

MARTIN (*both crossing and sitting on bench before fire*). Then you are glad to have me by your side again, Clara?

CLARA. Oh, Martin, you know I am. If I only knew for a positive fact that my cousin was safe, how happy I should be.

MARTIN. Have no fear for him, Clara. He knows enough to get out of any scrape he may get into. Yet it was a generous deed he did when he changed clothes and also places with me last night. If it was not for the thought of you, I would never have undertaken to make my escape from that hell of torment and death!

CLARA. And have you no suspicion of who it was placed the bills in your pocket that night, and then sent information to the police which led to your arrest on the charge of being a counterfeiter?

MARTIN. I haven't the slightest idea in the world. But some day I hope to run across him, and when I do ——

CLARA. What would you do, Martin?

MARTIN. Never mind now, Clara. There is a debt which can and must be paid. The life I have led for the last month in the prison I shall never forget as long as I live. The only satisfaction I can get will be to see the one, who sent me there by a false accusation, sent there himself. Then he will know what his scheming has caused an innocent man to suffer. (*Wildly.*) My God, Clara, if I was to be there another month, and at the same time know I was innocent, I would be a raving maniac.

CLARA. Poor Martin, how you must have suffered.

MARTIN. Suffer? The pangs of the damned at the end of the world are nothing to what I suffered in that hell on earth. But let us change the subject, Clara, and talk of something else. It almost drives me mad when I think of what I went through.

(*Rises.*) The storm must be over by this time. Let us go out and perhaps we can find some trace of your cousin Edwin.

CLARA. Very well, Martin. [*Both exeunt, L. C.*]

Enter EFFIE, R.

EFFIE (*rushing in*). Oh, brother Martin — (*Looks around.*) Why, he is not here. I wonder where can he be? (*Sits before fire.*) Oh, yes, I know now. He was with Clara when he left the other room. They must have gone out to look for Clara's cousin Edwin. (*Rises.*) I will get my things and join them. I think I owe the young man a greater debt of gratitude than any of them. Didn't he save my life at the risk of his own? Strange how he came to be the cousin of the girl my brother is going to make his wife. I sincerely hope my brother will be happy with Clara. She is such a lovely girl that I love her already. And then her cousin is so handsome. But I must hurry and get my wraps if I intend to join them in the search for the missing young man. [*Exit, R.*]

Enter ED., L. C.

ED. (*walking to fireplace*). This must be the place I was directed to come to after I left the prison last night. (*Looks around.*) Where the devil can they all be? Strange I haven't seen any one around. One thing is certain; some one lives here, for the fire didn't build itself. Perhaps, after all, I have struck the wrong place. Whether it's the right or the wrong place, I think I will enjoy the benefit of this fire for a while. The storm I got mixed up with last night was a holy terror and no mistake. Lucky for me the driver knew of that deserted cabin by the roadside, otherwise I don't know what would have become of us. Guess I will go out and see if I can find anybody who belongs here. There were the tracks of many feet in the snow outside the door, yet where are they all? Perhaps they have become alarmed when I failed to turn up, and have gone in search of me. Well, all that is left for me to do is go in search of them. Perhaps I shall run across Martin's lovely sister Effie. So here goes. [*Exit, L. C.*]

Enter EFFIE, R.

EFFIE. Now I am ready to join in the search for the miss-

ing one. How happy I should be if it was my good fortune to find him the first. At all events I am going to try.

[*Exit, R.*

Enter JOHN, L. C.

JOHN (*looking around cautiously*). I don't think there is any more of them in at the present time. Curse it, I am nearly frozen standing out there in that infernal snow. (*Crosses to R.*) I never knew how good a fire felt before! (*Looks around.*) So this is the place Martin Jackson came to last night after he made his escape from the prison? And she is here with him. Oh, what would I not give if I could only change places with Martin Jackson, and listen to the words of love she pours forth into his willing ears. But no, it's not to be. (*Savagely.*) I will have her yet though. I have sworn she shall never become the wife of Martin Jackson. I think I will take a stroll around, and perhaps I may meet her alone. None of them suspect me of anything yet, but that man Paul Gray. I fear him, and I don't know why. However, he better not cross my path too often, or he might find himself out of the way some morning.

[*Exit, L. C.*

Enter EFFIE, R.

EFFIE (*pouting*). Dear me, no sign of any of them. (*Sits at fireplace.*) I wonder what became of them all? It was real mean of them to go away and leave me here alone. Not that I am afraid, for there is no one within miles of this place but ourselves. But then it is the dread of being alone. If I only had some one to talk to it wouldn't be half so lonesome. For instance if Edwin was only here.

Enter ED., L. C.

ED. I can't find a single — (*Quickly.*) Hello! there is my cousin Clara now, talking to herself. She hasn't heard me yet. I know what I will do. I will steal up behind her and give her a kiss of cousinly greeting. I don't suppose she will relish it as much as one she would receive from Martin, and I know I would rather be kissing Martin's beautiful sister than his intended wife. Well, here goes.

(*He steals up behind EFFIE and throws his arms around her neck and kisses her. She screams and jumps up in alarm.*)

EFFIE. How dare you, sir?

ED. Holy smoke! Martin's sister!

EFFIE. Clara's cousin! (*Resumes seat.*)

ED. (*leaning on back of seat*). I beg a thousand pardons for my rudeness to you just now.

EFFIE. For what do you beg my pardon?

ED. For the great liberty I took just now in kissing you. The fact is I mistook you for my cousin.

EFFIE (*shyly*). And are you sorry I turned out to be the wrong girl? Am I not just as anxious to be kissed as your cousin?

ED. I suppose so. I was sure you were offended when you screamed.

EFFIE. I screamed because you took me by surprise.

ED. Miss Jackson.

EFFIE. Why do you call me Miss Jackson? Why not call me Effie?

ED. Well, that would hardly be proper. The fact is we are almost strangers to each other.

EFFIE (*quickly*). Say not so. How could the man who saved my life be a stranger to me? Do you think I am not grateful for what you have done? And if you only knew how anxious I was when you failed to arrive last night — But what am I saying? I am forgetting myself.

ED. Not at all. The words you have just spoken show you have a heart.

EFFIE (*laughing*). Why certainly I have a heart. Every girl is supposed to be supplied with that useful organ, I believe.

ED. I believe they are. But as a general thing it is not in the right place.

EFFIE. Certainly it is not in the right place. How could it be when it's on the left side?

ED. (*aside*). Pretty good for a Denver girl. (*Aloud.*) A truce to all this idle talk. Did your brother and Mr. Gray reach here all right last night?

EFFIE (*rising*). Yes, thanks to the noble deed you performed. (*Sincerely.*) Believe me, I shall remember it until my dying day.

ED. (*aside*). I can't stand much of this. (*Aloud.*) Nonsense! I only did what I thought was right.

EFFIE. You acted like a hero.

ED. (*looking around*). Where are all the rest of them?

EFFIE. They became frightened at your absence, and have gone in search of you.

ED. Indeed! Then they will have a hard job of it. Let us go and find them.

EFFIE. With pleasure. Come this way and we can head them off in front of this place. *[Both exeunt, R.]*

Enter MARTIN and CLARA, L. C.

CLARA (*crossing and sitting before fire*). No sign of my cousin yet. What can detain him? Something must surely have happened to him.

MARTIN (*standing beside her*). Cheer up, Clara. I have determined to take a desperate step and save the life of your cousin!

CLARA (*rising*). What do you mean, Martin?

MARTIN. I mean that if he is not here within a certain time, I will return to the prison and give myself up. By so doing they will release Edwin, if they are holding him a prisoner in consequence of having assisted me to escape.

CLARA (*clinging to him*). Oh, Martin, you shall not go.

MARTIN. I have made up my mind, so that nothing can change my decision.

CLARA (*wildly*). No, no, Martin, you shall not go! Anything but to return to that dreadful place. (*Clings to him.*) I will prevent you. Edwin is safe. I am sure of it. (*Entreatingly.*) Say you won't go, Martin. (*Kneels.*) See, Martin, the girl you love kneeling at your feet, and begging you not to return to that awful place. Oh, Martin, say you won't go!

MARTIN (*assisting her to rise*). Clara, I have made up my mind and I will not change it. By giving myself up the prison officials will release Edwin, if he is a prisoner. Once he is at liberty and I will take my chances of making my escape again.

CLARA. Oh, Martin, you will break my heart.

MARTIN. Do you think I could ever look you in the face and at the same time know I won your heart at the cost of your cousin's life?

CLARA. Will nothing prevent you from taking this rash step?

MARTIN. Nothing! (*Crosses to R.*)

CLARA. Where are you going now?

MARTIN. To prepare for the journey back to the prison. (*He crosses to her and embraces her.*) Farewell, Clara, until next we meet. (*He kisses her and exits, R.*)

CLARA (*wildly*). Oh, Martin, don't go! (*Sinks down on*

bench before the fire.) They may kill him once they find he is in their hands again. (*Springs up.*) I will stop him if I possibly can.

Enter JOHN, L. C.

JOHN (*standing before her*). Stop a moment! Miss Armstrong, there is something I wish to say to you.

CLARA. You here, Mr. Arnold?

JOHN. Yes, Miss Clara, I am here. Please resume your seat. (*She sits as before.*) There, that is better. Now there is something I wish to say to you of great importance.

CLARA. To me, sir?

JOHN. Precisely.

CLARA. Well, sir, I am all attention.

JOHN. Well, in the first place that was a good move your friends made when they rescued the young counterfeiter Martin Jackson. Unfortunately all did not succeed as it was planned.

CLARA. What do you mean, sir?

JOHN. I mean that your cousin has been captured and will be a prisoner until the criminal is given up to the officials of the prison again.

CLARA. For what will he be held a prisoner?

JOHN. For aiding a prisoner to escape from the Colorado state prison!

CLARA. My God! Can no one release him?

JOHN (*aside*). Now is my chance. (*Aloud.*) I can and will save him on one condition.

CLARA. Indeed! And what is it?

JOHN. That you become my wife!

CLARA. Marry you? Never!

JOHN. But I love you passionately and will make you a good and faithful husband! Remember it is to save the life of your cousin, Edwin Ray.

CLARA. I am the promised wife of Martin Jackson.

JOHN. But he is a counterfeiter!

CLARA. He has been accused of a crime he never committed!

JOHN. Then you refuse me?

CLARA. I most certainly do!

JOHN (*savagely*). Then, girl, prepare to die!

(*He draws knife from pocket.*)

CLARA (*rising in alarm*). Madman, what would you do?

JOHN. I mean to kill you. So prepare to die!

CLARA (*in alarm*). Kill me?

JOHN. Yes, kill you! I have sworn you shall never become the wife of Martin Jackson. I will kill you first and then myself.

CLARA (*calling*). Help!

JOHN (*catching hold of her*). Now die!

(*He raises the knife.*)

ED. (*dashing window R. C. open*). Hold on, old man! I am going to take a hand in this game!

(*Points revolver at JOHN.*)

Enter MARTIN, R.

MARTIN. Edwin, at last!

ED. You bet!

EFFIE (*standing in the open door, L. C.*). And I am here too!

CLARA and JOHN, L.

MARTIN *up R.*

ED. *at window, R. C.*

SLOW CURTAIN

(One week between Acts III and IV.)

ACT IV

SCENE.—*A plain room. Doors R. and L. ; large double door C. opens ; table and two chairs down L. ; sofa down R. ; piano up R. ; statues and other bric-à-brac around room. Music at rise.*

Enter ED., C.

ED. (*looking around*). Martin and his sister Effie have a pretty fine place here. I just left the rest of them admiring the pictures of Martin's ancestors in the gallery below. The only picture I admired in the entire place was the picture of Effie Jackson. Seems to me of late nothing else seems to be running through my mind but the name of this beautiful girl. That she would be a credit to any man as his wife is without saying. (*Sits on sofa.*) I wonder what would my Chicago friends say if they could only see me now? I suppose they would consider me a lucky dog. I would in fact consider myself one if I could only take back Effie Jackson to Chicago with me as my wife. But the question is, can I? Well, all I can do is to make a bluff at it and ask her. She can only say no, if she won't say yes.

Enter EFFIE, C.

EFFIE (*coming down*). So this is where I find you, is it? Evidently the pictures of my ancestors seem to have but little charm for you. (*She sits at table.*)

ED. Not so, Miss Jackson. I meant no disrespect to the pictures whatever. The fact is I am going to leave Denver and return to my home in Chicago.

EFFIE. You are going away then?

ED. Yes, indeed! There is but one thing that can keep me in Denver longer than this week.

EFFIE. Indeed!

ED. I would never have come here if it hadn't been for my health. I think after what I have gone through in Denver, my health is fully restored.

EFFIE. You have acted the part of a hero while in Colorado!

ED. Nonsense !

EFFIE. It is the truth. But for you my brother would now be in the Jefferson prison, instead of being under the shelter of his own roof.

ED. Strange, was it not, that on the very day we smuggled your brother into Denver, that he should have received a pardon from the governor of the state ?

EFFIE. I have strongly suspected that Mr. Gray had a hand in getting the governor to pardon Martin.

ED. And so have I.

EFFIE. I would really like to know who this Mr. Gray is. To me he is a man of mystery.

ED. Sometimes I think he is more than the simple Paul Gray, retired banker.

EFFIE. I have also thought the same on more than one occasion.

ED. In other words you think he is some one closely connected with the government ?

EFFIE. I do.

ED. At all events the man is a mystery and we will have to leave him as he is.

EFFIE. And yet he has proposed to Mrs. Marston, and has been accepted.

ED. Oh, he might easily do that, if he wanted to discover some plot.

EFFIE. Yes, that is true enough.

ED. And as for marrying Mrs. Marston, I don't believe he ever intends to.

EFFIE. What became of John Arnold after you let him go that day in the mountains ?

ED. I don't know. Nick Morton, the detective, told me he ran across him last night, here in the streets of Denver.

EFFIE. Indeed ! But do you really think he intended to kill your cousin Clara ?

ED. No ! I think he intended to frighten her more than anything else, so that she would consent to marry him. (*Rises.*) But time passes. I have some business to attend to. You know I leave for Chicago in the morning.

EFFIE (*rising*). Then you really mean to go ?

ED. I do.

EFFIE. But you said there was one thing that might still keep you in Denver. What is it ?

ED. Do you really wish to know, Effie ?

EFFIE. Yes.

ED. That one object is yourself!

EFFIE. I?

ED. Yes, you. I love you honestly and truly, Effie Jackson, and want you to become my wife. What is your answer?

EFFIE (*crossing and placing her arms around his neck*). This. (*She kisses him*.)

ED. My darling!

EFFIE (*shyly*). And you won't leave for Chicago in the morning?

ED. Not for ten years. Let us go now and tell the good news to the rest of them.

EFFIE. With all my heart.

[*Both exeunt, R.*]

Enter NICK, C.

NICK (*looking around*). No one here. They told me Mr. Gray was in this room waiting for me. I don't see any sign of him around. I think I will wait for him. (*Listens*.) Some one is coming. A woman evidently by the rustle of her skirts. I don't want to meet any women. (*Looks around*.) Where can I go? I might overhear something and at the same time meet the captain when he comes. I will go in here and wait.

[*Exit, L.*]

Enter LAURA, C.

LAURA (*sitting on sofa*). To-night or never I must find out if the banker intends to make me his wife. All hope of ever winning Martin Jackson to my side has left my mind. (*Passionately*.) And yet, my God, how I love him! How strange I feel to-night. (*Shudders*.) Can anything—(*lightly*) pshaw! I am growing nervous over trifles. And yet if the worst comes to the worst, this will soon end all my troubles in this world forever. (*Draws glass phial from her pocket and looks at it*.) One drop of this and all will be over. (*To the phial*.) You are a small object and can easily be broken, and yet your power is greater than all earthly monarchs.

(*Replaces phial in her pocket*.)

Enter JOHN, R.

JOHN (*calling softly*). Laura.

LAURA. John, you here?

JOHN (*coolly*). As you see, my dear sister.

(*Stands in front of her.*)

LAURA. Are you not afraid to be found in this house after the way you have treated Martin and his future wife, Clara Armstrong?

JOHN. Why should I? They know nothing.

LAURA. Very true. But they might learn.

JOHN. What good will it do them? They can prove nothing. No one besides yourself knows that it was John Arnold that placed the counterfeit bills in the pocket of Martin Jackson's coat. I was sure of getting him out of the way in order to have the Chicago girl all to myself. But somehow or other things haven't gone just right. Once Martin was in prison I was sure of preventing his friends from seeing him. I wrote to Alexander Adams, telling him to prevent any one from seeing the prisoner. As a member of Captain Bodkin's band he was bound to obey me!

LAURA. As you are the leader of the band he certainly was.

JOHN (*in alarm*). Hush! don't say that here. Walls have ears, you know.

LAURA (*looking around*). Nonsense! You are growing nervous. There is no one in sound of our voices.

JOHN. That may be true enough. Still it will do no harm to be careful.

LAURA. What answer did Alexander make to your request?

JOHN. He said it was impossible to do so.

LAURA. Impossible?

JOHN. Yes, impossible.

LAURA. And why?

JOHN. Because he had already received a letter from Paul Gray, which was signed by the governor of the state, directing him to allow the prisoner to see all his friends that would visit the prison for that purpose.

LAURA. Paul Gray again?

JOHN. Yes, the same old chap again. If I was a bit superstitious I would look upon the man as my nemesis. However, my dear sister, I must congratulate you on the very mysterious gentleman you are going to have for a husband.

LAURA. I haven't married him yet.

JOHN. No, nor I don't think you ever will.

LAURA. What do you mean, John?

JOHN. Nothing, Laura, simply nothing. But take my advice and find out what he intends to do.

LAURA. I mean to.

JOHN. And what will you do if he declines to make you his wife?

LAURA. I will have him arrested as a counterfeiter.

JOHN. How do you know he is one?

LAURA. He confessed himself one the night he asked me to become his wife.

JOHN. Good! Then instead of one man going to prison from this house to-night, there will be two!

LAURA. What do you mean by two?

JOHN. I mean I have not yet given up all hope of winning the Chicago girl. To-night I will publicly accuse Martin Jackson of being a counterfeiter, and the notorious leader, Captain Bodkin! Once he is out of my way I will lose no time in making Clara Armstrong my wife.

LAURA. What if she still refuses?

JOHN. What do I care for her refusal? I tell you, Laura, I am growing desperate. She must and shall become my wife.

LAURA. Let us retire for a while and at the right time have the police here to make the double arrest.

JOHN. Very well. I will write a note and send it to the police at once. Come, Laura. [*Both exeunt, R.*]

Enter NICK, L.

NICK (*looking after them*). Well, if they are not the two precious ones we have been after for over three years. And to think we never suspected him of being the head, and, in fact, none other than Bodkin himself. No wonder we had a sharp pair to deal with. No one for a moment would suspect the beautiful young widow, Mrs. Laura Marston, of being such a desperate criminal. And she is going to denounce to the police Paul Gray if he refuses to marry her. I wonder in what part of the house the captain is?

Enter PAUL, C.

PAUL. I am here, Nick.

NICK. And you have heard ——?

PAUL. I have heard everything. (*Sits on sofa.*)

NICK (*sitting at table*). And what are you going to do with them?

PAUL. I am going to let them carry out their schemes so far and no farther. At the proper time I will arrest them. You, Nick, remain near at hand so that you can make prisoners of John and his sister. Keep a close eye on John, for he might suspect something was wrong and give us the slip.

NICK. Have no fear, I will keep an eye on him and my hand too.

PAUL. I will attend to Mrs. Marston myself.

NICK. Very well, captain.

PAUL. The day of reckoning is close at hand, and my old friend, Alexander Adams, I won't forget either. The government never forgets a counterfeiter, eh, Nick?

NICK. Never, captain!

PAUL. Leave me now, Nick. I wish to be alone. Above all keep a good watch on John, and don't let him escape whatever you do.

NICK (*rising*). Never fear, captain. When John Arnold leaves this house to-night it will be as my prisoner. [*Exit, c.*]

PAUL. To think I never suspected John Arnold and his sister before is what makes me angry. True, I thought by proposing to Laura I might learn something that would be of some benefit to me. And you can bet I have. I never had any intention of making her my wife. After this the best thing I can do is to suspect every one and trust no one.

Enter LAURA, R.

LAURA. Ah, Paul, is it here I find you? (*Sits at table.*)

PAUL. As you see, Mrs. Marston.

LAURA. Mrs. Marston? Why use this strange name, Paul? Formerly you called me Laura!

PAUL. Did I?

LAURA. You certainly did. You remember the night you asked me to be your wife and I consented, I gave you permission to call me by my Christian name. Have you forgotten the night I speak of?

PAUL. No, seeing there is no reason for my doing so.

LAURA. How strange you speak this evening. What is the meaning of it? Do you not intend to keep your promise and make me your wife?

PAUL (*coolly*). Such, madam, is my intention. I have changed my mind and decline to form any alliance with you.

LAURA (*jumping up*). You shall suffer for this. I have

powerful friends, and they shall see that this insult shall not go unpunished.

PAUL (*coolly*). Very well, madam, appeal to your friends. I shall give them all the satisfaction they want.

LAURA (*walking up and down*). You shall hear from my brother John for this.

PAUL. Certainly, madam. I prefer to argue the question with him above all others.

LAURA (*furiously*). I will denounce you to the police as a counterfeiter and have you thrown into prison.

PAUL. You can prove nothing, my dear madam.

LAURA. I can prove everything. You confessed to me yourself that you had made all your wealth dealing in counterfeit money.

PAUL. My dear madam, you should at once go on the stage. As an actress requiring emotional talent you would completely fill the bill.

LAURA (*savagely*). Oh, you devil, it's your time to laugh now. But when next we meet it will be mine. [*Exit, C.*]

PAUL (*rising*). You beautiful devil, when next we do meet it will be for the last time outside the walls of a prison. Now to see what the rest of them are doing. [*Exit, R.*]

Enter JAMES, MARTIN and CLARA, C.

JAMES (*sitting on sofa*). I wonder what became of Edwin? I haven't seen him since he left the picture gallery a while ago.

MARTIN. No, nor I haven't seen Effie since he left the gallery either. (*Laughs.*) I noticed he wasn't gone long when she followed him. (*Sits at table.*)

CLARA (*laughing*). You don't suspect anything, do you?

(*She sits R. of table.*)

MARTIN. It's not necessary for me to suspect anything. I know my sister is in love with your cousin, and what is more I know your cousin is in love with my sister.

CLARA. A fair exchange is no robbery, you know.

(*Laughs.*)

MARTIN. You are right. And there is no one I would rather see my sister's husband than Edwin. He is all that is noble and generous.

JAMES. You may well say that, Martin. The boy is a

credit to any nation, and God knows I love him the same as if he was my own son instead of my nephew. You can never know how I felt that night in the mountain cabin when he failed to appear.

MARTIN. It was a lucky thing for me that Edwin appeared when he did, as I had just made up my mind to return to the prison and give myself up, and thus release Edwin if they held him a prisoner for aiding me to escape.

JAMES. Such a case would simply have been madness.

CLARA. I told him so at the time, but he wouldn't listen to me.

JAMES. Have you never had any suspicion who it was that placed the counterfeit bills in your pocket that night at the home of Mrs. Marston?

MARTIN. No. All those present that evening were friends, and have proved themselves such with the exception of one of them.

JAMES. One of them, Martin?

MARTIN. Yes, one of them.

CLARA. Which one of them is it?

MARTIN. John Arnold!

CLARA (*with a shudder*). Don't mention his name again, Martin. I shall never forget what occurred that morning in the mountains, and God only knows what might have happened if it hadn't been for the timely arrival of Edwin.

MARTIN. If I had been in Edwin's place John Arnold would never have left that room alive. But then Edwin and I are two different persons.

CLARA. We must all learn to forgive and forget.

MARTIN. That is true enough. I have it. Why didn't I think of it before?

JAMES. What is the matter, Martin?

CLARA. What excites you, dear?

MARTIN (*jumping up*). I have good reason to be. At last I have found the one who placed the bills in my pocket that night!

JAMES. You have?

MARTIN. I have! Fool that I am not to have suspected it before.

CLARA. Who is the person you suspect, Martin?

MARTIN. John Arnold is the man.

JAMES. John Arnold?

MARTIN. Yes, John Arnold and no other.

CLARA. But you have no proof of his guilt.

MARTIN. I don't need any proof. I have all I want. You remember when I went to the supper table I left my overcoat hanging up in the entrance. While at the supper table you remember John excused himself and left the room for a while. What would have been easier than to have slipped the bills into my overcoat pocket, and then send word to the police? Of course when they came the coat was searched, the bills found, and I was arrested for being a counterfeiter.

CLARA. Yes, Martin, I know. But don't forget Mr. Gray also excused himself from the table that night, and left the room. Might he not have placed the bills in your pocket?

MARTIN. No. Mr. Gray left the room after John did, and besides the man has proved himself too good a friend in the hour of need to suspect him. No, John Arnold is the one who placed the bills there. I am sure of it! But unfortunately we have no proof of his guilt.

CLARA. What could have been his motive in doing such a deed?

MARTIN. That is more than I can tell.

JAMES. And what if your suspicions prove true, Martin? What action will you take against him?

MARTIN. I will do nothing. There was a time while I was a prisoner I thought that if I could only place my hand on the neck of the man who sent me there I would surely strangle him! But now I am satisfied to let the law take its course.

CLARA. Poor Martin, how you must have suffered!

MARTIN. You may well say so. I would rather be dead than again be a prisoner there.

JAMES. I don't blame you, my boy.

MARTIN. But let us talk of something else.

Enter ED. and EFFIE, C.

ED. Yes, talk about me.

(EFFIE stands at MARTIN'S side.)

MARTIN. Edwin and my sister.

ED. You bet. You can't lose me in Denver.

CLARA. Where have you been all evening, Edwin?

ED. *(coming down to CLARA).* Look here, sis, you will

have to quit talking to me like that. My future wife don't like it, and neither do I!

ALL (*in surprise*). Your future wife?

ED. Yes, my future wife.

CLARA. What do you mean, Edwin?

ED. (*coolly*). I mean that I intend to make Effie Jackson the future Mrs. Edwin Ray.

MARTIN. My sister.

ED. Well, she holds that relationship to you at the present time, but she will soon be my wife.

MARTIN (*to his sister*). Is that right, Effie?

EFFIE (*shyly*). Yes, Martin.

MARTIN. And do you love him well enough to marry him?

EFFIE (*holding down her head*). I do.

(*She crosses and stands beside CLARA who rises and kisses her.*)

MARTIN. Then you can have him. I don't know of any one more worthy of her than you are, Edwin. Take her and be happy.

ED. (*shaking hands with him*). Thank you, Martin.

MARTIN (*to the girls*). Are you satisfied now, Effie?

EFFIE (*bashfully*). More than satisfied, Martin.

ED. (*slapping his uncle on the shoulder*). Are you not surprised, old man?

JAMES. Not at all. My dear boy, there is nothing in the world that you can do that would surprise me for a moment. I am too well used to you.

ED. I suppose so.

JAMES. It's a fact, I assure you.

ED. I haven't the slightest doubt of it. However, my days of surprising you are over. I intend to settle down and become a decent member of society.

JAMES. I trust so for the sake of the future Mrs. Ray.

ED. You will see if I don't.

Enter JOHN, C., followed by NICK.

ALL. John Arnold!

MARTIN. How dare you come where you are not wanted? Leave this house at once.

Enter PAUL, R., and stands listening.

JOHN. When I leave this house you will go with me as a prisoner.

Enter LAURA, L.

MARTIN. What do you mean, John Arnold?

JOHN (*coolly*). I accuse you of being Captain Bodkin, the great counterfeiter!

MARTIN. It's a lie. You will have to prove what you say.

JOHN. I can and will prove what I say.

PAUL (*coming down to group*). Very well, John, I wish you would.

LAURA. And I accuse this man of being his confederate!

ALL. A counterfeiter!

LAURA. Yes, a counterfeiter.

PAUL (*looking around*). Good! All the characters are present for the closing scenes in this drama of life. Listen all of you and I will tell you a short story that will amuse and at the same time astonish some of you. Before I go any further I wish to state to those of you who may wish to escape, at the end of the story, that the house is surrounded by police. Now for the story. Some five years ago a strange band of counterfeiters was formed under the leadership of a man known as Captain Bodkin. Their object was to counterfeit the money of the United States. The counterfeit money dealt in by this band was done in such an expert manner that it could hardly be distinguished from the genuine article. The police and members of the secret service bureau were baffled. I was in England at the time and the government sent for me. I came back to America and after four years of hard labor, I have been successful in my task. I now know you, John Arnold, as the mysterious Captain Bodkin of the counterfeiters' league, and your sister as your accomplice. I proposed marriage to your sister, not because I intended to keep my word, but in order to find out all I could.

JOHN. Who are you?

PAUL. To you all I am known as Paul Gray, the banker. My right name is Capt. Wilbur Foster, of the United States Secret Service bureau! (*To NICK.*) Remove the prisoners!

LAURA (*placing hand in her bosom and withdrawing glass phial*). I will baffle you all yet!

PAUL. Stop her!

LAURA. Too late!

(She swallows contents of phial and falls to the stage.)

MARTIN *(bending over her)*. She is dead !

PAUL. She died as she has lived !

NICK *and* JOHN, C.

MARTIN *on his knees beside*

JAMES, ED. *and*

LAURA, L.

PAUL, R. C.

EFFIE *and* CLARA, L.

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